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Mrs Rebecca Edge
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Dear Mrs Edge

Short inspection of Blue Bell Hill Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 12 February 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since that time, much has changed at the school. You were appointed as the substantive headteacher soon after the last inspection. The school has grown in size and moved into new and improved accommodation. You have managed these changes extremely well. You are an excellent role model for staff and pupils. Your extremely high expectations are reflected in the good quality of provision, the dedication of staff and the exemplary attitudes of pupils to their learning.

The parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and sent additional text messages are overwhelmingly positive about the school, especially leadership. Leaders and trustees have built strong relationships and links with the local community. Pupils' social and physical development are enhanced by the strong partnerships forged with local business and sports partnerships, for example the ice hockey and football teams. Pupils have a great sense of pride about their school. The vast majority of parents would recommend the school to other families.

You have a close working partnership with the trustees. Trustees hold you to account well and regularly visit the school to check how it is doing. They ensure that there is no complacency. You make the very best use of the expertise in the trust, for example specialist research and support facilities that enhance the curriculum, such as the 'maths hub'. Professional development is appreciated by staff and used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Progress in writing and mathematics is good and the current achievement of pupils in key stage 2 is in line with national averages. An effective system has been put in place to support teachers so that they can continue to improve their teaching. The reading, writing and mathematics leaders have a good understanding of how to continue improving their subjects.

In July 2018, the school's key stage 1 results were disappointing in reading and writing. Your response to these results has been effective. Most teaching is now characterised by high expectations, precise questioning, good subject knowledge and a positive classroom atmosphere. As a result, pupils work hard and enjoy their lessons. A detailed look at pupils' books showed that a large majority are now working at age-related expectations and above. You have identified teaching that needs to improve further and have put in place effective support, coaching and training plans to secure the necessary improvements.

Behaviour is managed well. Pupils' behaviour is good both in class and around school. In class, pupils show considerable pride in their work. One pupil proudly showed me the improvement in his handwriting this year and explained that for the first time he had found an exciting book to read. On occasion, a small proportion of pupils find it hard to concentrate in class. However, teachers and support staff act quickly and sensitively to ensure that the appropriate support is given so that everyone can get back to work quickly.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders at all levels have successfully established a strong culture of safeguarding and arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. You ensure that staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibility to keep children safe. They understand the importance of taking prompt action when they have concerns about a pupil. Trustees undertake their own checks to make sure that the school's safeguarding systems and procedures work effectively.

Pupils spoken with said that they felt safe in school. They said that they are very confident that should they have a problem it would be dealt with quickly. As one pupil commented, 'This is a safe and happy school.' Activities, such as visits from the local police, help pupils to learn about the dangers they may face outside school, including how to keep safe when online and 'stranger danger'.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher to confirm the lines of enquiry for the inspection. We agreed these to be: provision within the early years, progress in key stage 1, the achievement of the most able pupils, and leaders' curriculum and subject development.
- Leaders have ensured that teaching and children's progress within the early years have significantly improved. The provision now meets the needs of children well. There is a rich and stimulating curriculum that supports learning for boys and girls. The school rightly identifies the priority to accelerate progress for the most

able children.

- Although pupils progressed well at the end of key stage 1 in 2018, they did not attain as well as the national average. Leaders have taken effective action to improve pupils' achievement in key stage 1, especially that of disadvantaged pupils. Teachers have received high-quality training and coaching. Evidence seen from leaders' performance information and a scrutiny of pupils' books confirms that progress in current Year 2 is good. Pupils are becoming confident writers and are improving their number skills at a good pace.
- Leaders are rightly focused on ensuring that the most able pupils achieve as they should. In lessons, many teachers make good use of questioning and discussion to extend the skills and understanding of the most able pupils. However, at times teachers take insufficient account of pupils' prior learning when setting tasks and activities, especially for the most able disadvantaged pupils. We agreed that this is a priority for continued improvement.
- Leaders are keen to make sure pupils experience a wide range of learning activities. They are currently reviewing curriculum provision. Pupils are very positive about the wide range of learning they experience, particularly in sport, art and music. They say that they have many opportunities to develop a wide range of skills in these areas, both in lessons and in clubs. They are proud of the themes that underpin the curriculum of 'resourcefulness, reciprocity, resilience and reflectiveness'.
- The teaching of reading, including for reluctant readers, is highly creative. Many pupils enjoy reading. Opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills through imaginative additional provision, such as 'spelling sheds' and a book club which are well-liked by pupils.
- Pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics is of uneven quality. I could see in workbooks that teachers do not always expect enough of their pupils across the range of subjects they study, including science and history. Consequently, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the most able, are not always able to develop the full range of skills, knowledge and understanding required by the national curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a consistently high level of challenge for the most able
- work in science, history and all other subjects demands enough of pupils and helps them to develop a wider range of skills, knowledge and understanding
- successful strategies in English and mathematics to diminish differences between groups of pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, are fully embedded across the whole curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Phil Garnham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, subject and phase leaders, a group of five trustees and some parents, after school. I reviewed safeguarding procedures and policies. I observed teaching in a range of classes jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. I considered the views of parents posted on Parent View and through additional text messages and the views of staff. I considered a range of school documents which included the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, action plans for improving pupils' outcomes, the pupil premium reports and pupils' progress information for all classes. I spoke to pupils about their learning and looked closely at a selection of pupils' books.